



THE LUTHERAN WITNESS™

Streaming Worldwide on the Web



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TO THE READER

In a church body as large as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, a constant challenge is trying to stay in touch with everyone to some degree. This isn't easy to do. There are 2.5 million of us in some 900,000 households attending 6,150 congregations in 35 districts from Maine to Hawaii.

The Lutheran Witness is one example of a communications tool that seeks to remind people that, although we represent

many walks of life in all parts of the country, we nonetheless march under the common banner of the LCMS.

We have other such reminders, or touchstones, of our shared identity. Consider our new hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book*. Or the *Ablaze!* movement. Or the Synod's Web site, www.lcms.org. Or the imprint of Concordia Publishing House. Or our familiar, burgundy, tripartite logo cross.

Then there's KFUE Radio, the subject of this month's cover story.

Thanks to Internet audio streaming, anyone, anywhere, anytime, assuming he or she has a computer, can listen to the Synod's radio ministry—either on the AM side (Gospel-based talk radio) or FM (classical and sacred music). With a couple clicks of the mouse, you can form a bond with a major communications vehicle of your Synod, and it with you.

Perhaps you'll give it a try sometime at www.kfuo.org.

*David L. Strand, Executive Director
Board for Communication Services*

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Extravagant Grace

A summer camp experience demonstrates God's love in powerful ways.

by Ann Schwartz

*Dear God,
Thank You for camp!*

Kristin (not her real name), an energetic 8-year-old with an infectious laugh, began her letter to God this way. Last summer, I had the joy of serving as Kristin's camp counselor. Every summer, many children eagerly anticipate going to camp, and for the 50-plus children who attended camp with Kristin, the excitement was intense. Being at camp meant a week of swimming, fishing, crafts, singing, and Bible stories. But that was not all. The children at this camp were lavished with love and buoyed by encouragement. For one week, they also were not singled out or stigmatized for being in foster care. That's because all of the children at the camp were residing with foster families.

Children in foster care struggle with the impact of past abuse and neglect. In entering out-of-home care, they also experience the loss of established relationships. They may be separated, not only from birth parents, but also from siblings and extended family members. They may have to attend a new school or move to a different neighborhood. These losses are compounded for children who spend time in multiple foster homes.

At this camp, children who have dealt with so much loss had the chance to hear about God's love and see it demonstrated in powerful ways. The camp was structured so that the children received a great deal of personal, loving attention from adults. The ratio of counselor

to camper was only one to two, allowing the development of strong connections. Other adults also served as surrogate grandparents.

The week's theme, "Journeys with Joseph," allowed the children to travel with Joseph, whose story culminates with these words to his brothers: "You intended to harm me,



but God intended it for good to accomplish what is not being done, the saving of many lives" (Gen. 50:20). What a story of promise for children who, like Joseph, have faced rejection and separation!

A highlight of the week was the "Everybody's Special Day" party held on the final evening. It was an elaborate birthday party thrown for all of the children. An evening that might be seen as an excessive display under other circumstances was an incredible time of wonder for children who had experienced few, if any, previous birthday celebrations.

At the party, as I had the chance

to sing, shout, and eat cake, I was struck by how the party also evoked powerful images of God's grace and blessings. As the children were called forward to receive their presents, all eagerly anticipating the moment, I found that I could not hold back my tears. The children tore off ribbons and unwrapped colorful boxes. Every time they thought they were finished, they found one more thing inside. As I observed this scene (over 50 times), I was reminded of a beautiful passage in Ephesians 1:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ... In Him we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding (3-8).

The children had a glimpse of heaven that night. But what God has given them is so much greater than the best birthday party they could imagine.

I pray that Kristin and all the children who went to camp last year will continue to grow in the love of our Lord and receive that love from those around them, even if they are unable to be reunited with their parents or find adoptive parents. May they be comforted by the love of a Father who has adopted them, who is, as Luther once exclaimed, "extravagantly rich in His grace."

Dr. Ann Schwartz is associate professor of sociology at Concordia University, Austin, Texas.

By faith

The latest article by Dr. Paul L. Maier—“The Mystery of the Missing Body” (April)—hits the doctrinal nail on the head. We Christians know of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead by faith, so that no amount of fallacious arguments or outlandish theories to the contrary will impress or sway us.

We should not be shocked or surprised at the efforts of James D. Tabor and others to disprove the Resurrection. They are not new in their undertakings. Witness this statement of the ante-Nicene church father, Athenagoras, about A.D. 177: “By the side of every opinion and doctrine which agrees with the truth of things, there springs up some falsehood; and it

L. Maier—“The Mystery of the Missing Body” and “The Judge Who Changed History.”

I found both articles interesting and easy to read. I hope you print more articles by Dr. Maier. He makes history fun to read.

*Carolyn Copeland
Sun City, Ariz.*

Defending the unborn

I was deeply offended by the letters to the editor column in the March issue of *The Lutheran Witness*. While emotions run high on the stem-cell debate, the position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been unwavering: From the moment of conception, human beings are precious in the sight of God.

I understand the editor's desire to be “fair and balanced” by printing

tors ... and those in the LCMS who are in positions of public responsibility have faltered in their defense of the unborn” (Res. 6-02A).

The testimony of Holy Scripture is clear: “Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5). A recent CTCR report was titled, “Christian Care and *Pre-implantation Human Life*” (emphasis added). In 1986, the Synod in convention adopted a resolution that stated, in part, “the living but unborn are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception.” Though there may be a wide range of personal opinions in our Synod on this issue, God's Word is unambiguous.

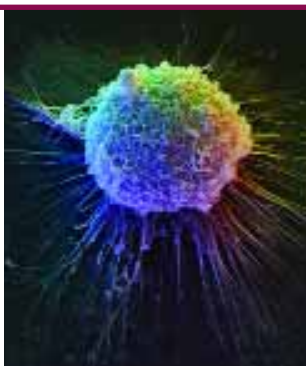
Despite what the two writers said, “adapting our language to realistic fact” and assuming that the unborn are “potential human beings” if they are given the “proper environment” goes against the Word of God. We can no more adapt our language to violate God's Word than we can turn the sky green by changing the name of the color. That we *think* sinful behavior is acceptable just shows how our fallen human intellect can be co-opted by the devil for evil purposes. That is why we pray in the Lord's Prayer, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

I pray that the writers of those letters, and all who agree with them, would be brought back to the truth of God's Word.

*Rev. Lincoln C. Winter
Wheatland, Wyo.*

Seeking Ablaze!

Each month I look forward to receiving *The Lutheran Witness*. I especially enjoy reading the mission-outreach articles, e.g., South Africa (April), Cambodia (February), early-childhood centers (December), and Indonesia (October). Missionaries we support come alive when we can read



We can no more adapt our language to violate God's Word than we can turn the sky green by changing the name of the color. That we *think* sinful behavior is acceptable just shows how our fallen human intellect can be co-opted by the devil for evil purposes.

*Rev. Lincoln C. Winter
Wheatland, Wyo.*

does so, not because it takes its rise naturally from some fundamental principle, or from some cause peculiar to the matter in hand, but because it is invented on purpose by men who set a value on the spurious seed, for its tendency to corrupt the truth” (“The Resurrection of the Dead”).

From the beginnings of Christianity these benighted souls have been striving, and failing, to deny the Resurrection. By now they should know better.

*Rev. Giles Zimmer, Emeritus
Waseca, Minn.*

I want to compliment you on the two recent articles by Dr. Paul

letters with opposing viewpoints. But when those letters speak against the clear testimony of God's Word, they do not give a Lutheran witness, but a worldly witness. *The Lutheran Witness* is supposed to be “The Lutheran Witness” of our belief to the world. The editors, while rightly desiring debate on issues, have no right to publish letters that so clearly go against our beliefs, with no corrective comment at all.

Our Synod has repeatedly “voiced its strong support of defenseless human life from conception” (2001 *Convention Proceedings*, Res. 6-02A). As these letters tragically demonstrate, “pas-

firsthand their stories from the mission field.

However, looking back seven months I see no articles that give us an update on the *Ablaze!* movement. Yes, President Kieschnick used the word *Ablaze!* in a couple of his messages, but I would expect that a movement like this, with its significant evangelism goals, would get coverage each month, from how individuals can be involved and new churches being planted to new mission starts around the world. *Ablaze!* is a great movement. Let's keep it in front of the members.

*Arlynn Sanders
Ripon, Wis.*

Readers can expect to see an increase in stories on Ablaze! — starting with a piece on “Fan into Flame” on Page 10 of this issue.
— Ed.

**Send letters to “Letters,”
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or send them via e-mail to
Lutheran.Witness@LCMS.org.**



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KFUO: Streaming Worldwide on the Web

With the help of modern technology, KFUO, the radio ministry of the LCMS, now reaches listeners in every corner of the world 24/7—and the response has been amazing.

by James Heine

Visit the facilities of KFUO, the radio ministry of the LCMS, on a damp early-May afternoon, and a familiar sight beckons. Tucked into a corner of the campus of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis is KFUO's familiar radio tower, and next to it, the cozy collegiate-gothic building that is the stone-and-mortar incarnation of the broadcast dreams of KFUO's 20th-century founders: Richard T. Kretzschmar, John H.C. Fritz, and Walter A. Maier.

Inside KFUO's headquarters—the oldest continuously operating broadcast facility in the U.S., notes Dennis Stortz, director of broadcast operations—Rev. Kretzschmar, Dr. Fritz, and Dr. Maier would today find much that is familiar. Studio A, the station's traditional “performance” studio, remains just inside the lobby. Off to the left of the lobby, and a few steps down a hall, is Studio C, the not-so-large booth from which Dr. Maier broadcast his “Lutheran Hour” messages. Down another hall is the museum, in which they would find office and broadcasting equipment from their own years at the station.

In the beginning, in 1924, just after the advent of commercial radio, KFUO-AM shared its position on the radio dial with KSD-AM, then the radio station of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and both stations struggled—and often competed at cross-purposes—to reach their listeners, Stortz explains. Later, KFUO-AM acquired its present home on the dial, 850, and the reach of its daytime signal encompassed about 100 miles, as it does today.

Yet today, he notes, the trio of founders would probably be delighted to learn that their station—which they donated to the LCMS in 1926—reaches around the world, thanks to the Internet and “streaming”—computer-speak

Reaching around the globe: The dots on the map indicate where listeners have recently heard KFUO.org.

for the technology that allows listeners to access programming via the Web.

“We like to say that with kfuoam.org and CLASSIC99.com, ‘We are where you are,’” says Stortz, smiling, “but it’s more than that. Now we can be where you aren’t. That’s important for the mission of the church and our contributions to the culture.”

“On your behalf, via kfuoam.org, we can reach South Africa or Thailand or China with the Good News of Jesus,” Stortz adds. “Meanwhile, with CLASSIC99.com, we can provide great classical programming whether you’re in Lexington, Ky., or Lisbon, Portugal. We can be a familiar voice from home for our members and friends around the world—and for our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, as some of them have told us via e-mail.”

The advent of streaming continues the “miracle of radio” his father foresaw, observes Dr. Paul L. Maier, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, a frequent contributor to this magazine, and second vice-president of the Synod.

“As the principal founder of KFUO, my father thought many more KFUOs would be necessary across the world to convey the Gospel via radio,” Maier recalls. “But ‘chain broadcasting’—the networks—came along and partially solved that problem, and ‘The Lutheran Hour’ was born.”

Echoing Stortz, Maier observed in a recent e-mail exchange that live Internet streaming creates an entirely new dimension for radio.

“To say that my father would be thrilled by this development is to understate,” he wrote. “I, personally, rejoice in the fact that I am sending you this message from Frankfurt, Germany, while listening to beautiful music courtesy of KFUO’s CLASSIC99.”



Dr. Walter A. Maier

The AM side of KFUFU began streaming its programming in 1998; the FM side (CLASSIC99), in 1999, Stortz explains. CLASSIC99, however, discontinued streaming in 2002 amid industry-wide disputes about copyright regulations pertaining to voice talent, music ownership, and commercial content. "The industry issues have now been resolved, and CLASSIC99 returned to Internet streaming last fall," he says.

The response to the Internet availability of KFUFU-AM and CLASSIC99 has been rewarding—and sometimes touching, Stortz adds. Comments flow in from around the world—not only from Germany, as in the case of Dr. Maier, but also from Italy, France, Iceland, Hungary, Mexico, and the Philippines, among others.

Dr. Robert Roegner, executive director of LCMS World Mission, has no doubt the Internet and streaming have opened up radio broadcasting as never before. "We've just scratched the surface," he says. "I think we're at the beginning of some wonderful opportunities as it relates to the Internet and computer technology."

Technology aside, the focus of KFUFU has remained constant through its 83-year history, Stortz observes. He has reviewed the program log of the inaugural broadcast on Dec. 14, 1924: "Rev. Kretzschmar was the first on-air person to speak, a prayer was offered, thanking God for this new opportunity to spread the Gospel, and then they played a Brahms quartet. To me, KFUFU still represents that kind of programming."

If you review the program logs from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, and even today, "the station—two stations, really—has always offered

a unique mix of Gospel and music, talk and music, and cultural and fine-arts presentations," Stortz continues.

Until the mid-1970s, programming on the AM and FM stations was nearly identical, Stortz says, but with changes mandated by new FCC regulations in 1975, which decreed that in a multiple-license situation such as that of KFUFU-AM and -FM programming should be different, CLASSIC99 expanded its fine-arts broadcasting while KFUFU-AM retained its focus on inspirational programming.

"If the founders were here today, to see the capability we now have with Internet technology, they would be absolutely delighted," says Rev. Paul Devantier, the popular host of KFUFU's syndicated "By the Way."

Their vision at the time was that radio—then an emerging technology itself—"would ultimately provide an opportunity for the LCMS to reach around the world," Devantier explains. "They would say, 'Halleluia! Praise

the Lord. Thanks for this new gift.'"

From his laptop in Germany, Maier agrees: Now "KFUFU—"The Gospel Voice"—covers the world indeed!" he observes.



Rev. Tom Baker has hosted the popular program "Law and Gospel" on KFUFU-AM for 10 years.

James Heine, a writer and editor, is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Mo.

We Are Where You Are

If you have broadband Internet access, you can find KFUFU-AM on the Web at kfuam.org and KFUFU-FM at CLASSIC99.com. From either site, you can simply click on "Listen Now" and tune in via your computer.

Popular programs on KFUFU-AM include "Issues, Etc.," "The Morning Show"; "Law and Gospel," "Front Porch Parenting," and "The Meyer Minute."

In addition to fine music 24/7, CLASSIC99, KFUFU-FM, offers programming that includes "Friday Morning with the Arts," "St. Louis



Symphony Preview," "Composer's Datebook," "Classic Kids," "Broadway Spotlight," and "Live from the Garden."

KFUFU/CLASSIC99 also carries religious programming, including Sunday morning worship services, "Joy," "Bach at the Sem," and sacred-music offerings at the holidays and during other festival seasons of the church year.

KFUFU is a listener-supported radio station. If you would like to help KFUFU take the Gospel message "to the ends of the earth," please make your gift payable to KFUFU Radio and send it to KFUFU Radio, 85 Founders Lane, St. Louis, MO 63105-9907.

You can also make a credit-card gift by phone at (888) 930-4438, ext. 1019, or via the Internet at www.kfu.org.

— J.H.H.



Over the years, KFUE's commitment to quality programming and community service has generated numerous awards, observes Dennis Stortz, KFUE director of broadcast operations.

Praise for CLASSIC99 hits the high notes

As with the AM license in 1924, KFUE acquired the FM license for CLASSIC99 with little fanfare and expense in 1948, says Dennis Stortz, KFUE director of broadcast operations.

At the time, few people were interested in FM, he explains. The medium really didn't come into its own until the mid-1960s, and by that time a lot of organizations had given up on it.

The leadership of the LCMS, and of KFUE, didn't give up, however, and today the FM license is "unbelievably valuable, not only in dollars and cents, but because of its position on the dial, and its clarity and signal," Stortz says.

CLASSIC99 is immeasurably valuable in another sense, too, Stortz, adds. In many ways, it serves as the cultural voice of the region, and now with the addition of CLASSIC99.com, it offers that voice and perspective to the world, just in time for its 60th anniversary.

David Robertson, music director and principal conductor of the St.

The Marconi Award: The National Association of Broadcasters named CLASSIC99 the "Classical Station of the Year" in 1999.



KFUE-AM received a Gold Angel award for its inspirational programming from the Excellence in Media organization in 2000.

Louis Symphony Orchestra, concurs. The region is fortunate to have a station such as CLASSIC99. It "provides an access to all sorts of aspects of the arts, music principally, because that's where the broadcast medium really excels," he says.

Charles MacKay, Opera Theatre of St. Louis general director, agrees: Long before Opera Theatre made its debut in St. Louis, KFUE championed vocal music, including opera. KFUE has "brought the joy of singing into households all over this area by broadcasting live performances by the Metropolitan Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago, as well as historic performances from around the globe," he says.

Compared with other fine-arts stations around the country, KFUE excels—and distinguishes itself—in its commitment to the region, Robertson observes.

"Many fine-arts programs tend to forget they are in a specific community," he says. "One of the hallmarks of CLASSIC99 is that it really is concerned that its listeners know what's going on in and around St. Louis, so that people can experience the arts firsthand."



— J.H.H.

E-notes from KFUE Listeners around the World

"I just wanted to write and say how much I enjoy your podcasts over here in England. I live near Cambridge, in the east of England, and the miracle of the Internet means I can still hear you loud and clear."

"I'm thankful to God for your Christian service through your broadcasts. It is a great service to the church and the world. Being now here in Taiwan, I'm particularly thankful that you're online, and I can easily access your live streaming or your archived programs."

— Two KFUE-AM listeners

"We listen online to KFUE-AM in the morning and CLASSIC99 in the afternoon and evenings from Budapest. We sure appreciate the touch from home. We've been missionaries with the Free Methodist Church in Hungary since 1996. ... Thanks for 'being there' day and night."

"I listened to CLASSIC99 for years when I lived in the St. Louis area. Now, as a resident of Bermuda, I'm delighted to find you on the Web. Thanks for keeping me connected with St. Louis and the arts."

"Just a little note to let you know that I'm listening to CLASSIC99 (via the Internet, of course), on a hot (100° F) Sunday afternoon at Al-Taqaddum Air Base at the side of beautiful Lake Habbaniyah in Iraq. Thanks for the great work."

— Comments from CLASSIC99 listeners

From its founding in 1924, KFUE has been the broadcast voice of the LCMS to the world. For more stories about KFUE Radio, visit www.lcms.org/witness.



Remembering the Family

by Gregory Wismar

One of the features of summertime is attending family reunions. Sometimes these are large, organized events held on a regular basis. Other reunions are much less formal, as relatives get together for visiting, either across town or across the country.

Often, one of the best features of family reunions is the sharing of memories about family members and events from days gone by. Remembering the family from generations past and passing along those remembrances strengthens family ties.

In the life of the Church, the custom of observing commemorations is a way by which our corporate memory of notable people and places is renewed and passed along from generation to generation. In Hebrews 13:7, the writer of the letter directs us to what sort of remembering?

A list of commemorations of special people and events is located at the front of many hymnals. The new *Lutheran Service Book* contains an expanded list on pages xii and xiii of the pew and gift editions. In the entries for the months of June and July, we present a number of notable Christian people and events to be recalled during these days. The entries fall into three special categories:

First, there are lists of special people from the Bible, such as Elisha (June 14), Jeremiah (June 26), Isaiah (July 6), Ruth (July 16), Elijah (July 20), Ezekiel (July 21), and Joseph of Arimathea (July 31). Special items of interest about each of these people of God are found in the Bible and may be researched through concordances and Bible encyclopedias. For example, according to John 19:38–39, who assisted Joseph of Arimathea in



the burial of Jesus?

The second group of commemorations is of notable Christian people from centuries past who made significant contributions to the growth and vitality of the Church. In June and July, this list helps us remember Justin (June 1), Boniface of Mainz (June 5), Cyril of Alexandria (June 27), Irenaeus of Lyons (June 28), Johann Sebastian Bach (July 28), and Robert Barnes (July 30). Just as each family may contain some members more readily remembered than others, so some of the commemorated men and women here are better known than others might be. Yet each man and woman on the roster is an important member of our family of faith, someone for us to discover and learn from. (The Web site of the LCMS Commission on Worship has a full list of their biographies.)

By faith, we have the hope of meeting these people whether we know of them by name on earth or not. What does John tell in this regard in Rev. 14:13?

The third type of commemoration is the remembering of special events, just as we think back on weddings, anniversaries, and graduations. Two major Christian events remembered in June are the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea on the 12th and the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession on the 25th. A text traditionally associated with this day in the life of the Church reminds us that there is blessing for us in remembering and honoring the people and occasions that have shaped our faith. Who brings pleasure to the Lord, according to Psalm 149:4?

Taking time to remember our extended family in Christ through discovering the treasures of the commemorations is a special way to enrich the memorable days of summer.

Dr. Greg Wismar is pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Newtown, Conn. He serves as chairman of Synod's Commission on Worship.

Fan into Flame: Igniting Hearts

by Ron Nelson

Fan into Flame kindles ministry in Florida

Hispanic outreach in the area surrounding Immokalee, Fla., has taken a quantum leap as a result of multiple distributions of *Fan into Flame* funds. More than \$137,000 from dedicated lead gifts has been distributed for *Amigos en Cristo* (“friends in Christ”), a ministry of the LCMS Southwest Florida Outreach Council.

Immigrants and migrant workers seek out *Amigos en Cristo* to help with problems and information concerning their arrival and residence. *Amigos en Cristo* helps newcomers learn English; find housing and jobs; enroll children in school; and learn about tax, labor, and immigration laws. As part of its “welcoming ministry,” council members invite newcomers to small gatherings, where they are able to effectively share the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.



Mobile Mexican consulate: Amigos volunteers register people to see consulate representatives.

Fan into Flame is the national campaign in support of the *Ablaze!* vision of LCMS World Mission and its partners to share the Gospel with 100 million unreached or uncommitted people globally by 2017. The campaign, approved by the 2004 LCMS convention (Res. 1–04), supports outreach activities of *Ablaze!* and seeks gifts of \$100 million by 2010.

Historic church in Russia reclaimed

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia, a partner church of the LCMS, has regained possession of a historic cathedral in St. Petersburg. The building is located at a transportation crossroads, near a busy streetcar stop in a vibrant part of the city, a few blocks from St. Petersburg University. Membership includes many students and university faculty.

Fan into Flame campaign gifts are being sent on a regular basis to support urgent building renovation. The latest distribution was \$25,000. With a steady flow of funds, members of the congregation can meet government requirements for renovation progress.

The church was organized in 1732, 29 years after the founding of St. Petersburg itself. The current 1876 structure was taken over by the Russian government in 1935 and converted into a sports-equipment factory. As part of the agreement to return the building to the congregation, the Russian government expects the congregation, St. Michael, to restore the building to its original condition. Renovation is ongoing on the first and second floors, but two more interior floors plus the exterior must be renovated or the building will revert to the city for demolition.

Renovations already completed provide space for many activities, which serve as outreach opportunities for members. In addition to regular worship services, Saturday evening concerts are becoming a tradition at St. Michael. More than 150 people regularly attend each performance, providing a great opportunity for evangelistic outreach. A street-level Internet café and Christian bookstore are also open. English-language classes are being taught, and AIDS awareness seminars are being conducted for youth. As renovation continues through the distribution of *Fan into Flame* gifts, the congregation is becoming a center of community activity.

To discover how *Fan into Flame* will help your congregation and district ignite the hearts of the unreached with the Gospel, call 1-800-977-2017 or visit the Web site at www.fanintoflamecms.org.

Rev. Ronald E. Nelson is director of communications for LCMS World Mission Support.

Fan into Flame unrestricted funds are distributed quarterly based on an Acts 1:8 model: “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem ... Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Of the net proceeds, distributions consist of

- 15 percent to participating congregations;
- 15 percent to the district;
- 20 percent for national mission projects;
- 50 percent to fund LCMS World Mission global projects.

One Message: Christ

The 63rd Regular LCMS Convention meets July 14–19 in Houston.

by Roland Lovstad

“One Message: Christ” will be the theme for the 63rd Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod when it meets July 14–19 in Houston, Texas.

As many as 1,250 voting delegates and 400 advisory delegates are expected to attend the triennial convention. Delegates will elect officers and members of boards and commissions, consider reports, debate resolutions, worship, and enjoy fellowship. Missionaries and representatives of partner churches will attend, and the colleges and seminaries will host gatherings for alumni and friends. A large exhibit area will host displays from Synod ministries, higher-education institutions, recognized service organizations, and vendors.

Among significant issues coming before the convention are proposals for increasing funding for the “at large” work of national and district offices, a procedure for training and ordaining “specific ministry pastors,” review of the Synod’s dispute-resolution process, and a proposal to fine-tune the 2004 convention’s action regarding the authority of the Synod’s Board of Directors.

Early business will include the election of officers. Candidates for president (see p. 16) include Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, Dr. John C. Wohlrabe Jr., Dr. Wallace R. Schulz, Dr. William R. Diekelman, and Rev. Daniel Preus.

The convention will also elect the Synod’s five vice-presidents, its secretary and treasurer, and members of its board of directors, as well as the members of various other boards, commissions, and corporate entities.



On the agenda

In early May, the Office of the Secretary of the Synod sent the *Convention Workbook* to all delegates and alternates, board and commission members, and rostered church workers.

The *Workbook* includes reports from boards and commissions, documents from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, and reports from the Synod’s 35 districts. It also contains 361 overtures (proposed resolutions) submitted by congregations,

district conventions, church-worker conferences, and other official entities.

Synod Secretary Raymond Hartwig said the *Workbook* has 44 fewer pages than the 2004 edition. He said 133 fewer overtures were submitted for this convention.

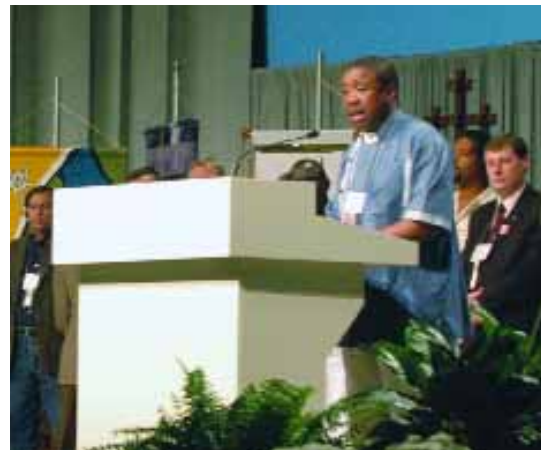
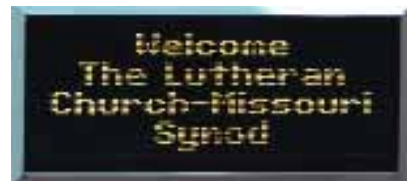
“The Synod has obligated itself to respond to every overture that is properly submitted to the convention,” Hartwig explained. “They are assigned to convention floor committees, and these committees decide what will be done with each overture. All are taken seriously.”

Eight floor committees—comprised of convention delegates and representatives—met May 18–21 in St. Louis to review the reports and overtures and to draft resolutions for the convention. The floor committees will meet again, prior to the convention, and will hold open hearings July 14 in Houston. They will continue to function during the convention, presenting their resolutions according to the agenda of the day.

The 68 reports in the *Workbook* are also assigned to a floor committee. Hartwig said the committees have the liberty to draft resolutions based on information and recommendations made in those reports.

Following are topics, grouped by floor committee, likely to be considered by the convention.

Missions. A number of overtures deal with the Synod’s *Ablaze!* movement to share the Gospel with 100 million unreached or uncommitted people worldwide by 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The overtures deal with giving priority to foreign missions, encouraging mission-planting partnerships, clarifying terms used in *Ablaze!* materials, and accounting of funds. Other mission-related overtures deal with cooperative work in campus ministry and military chaplaincy.



District and Congregational Services. Doctrinal concerns about worship styles and materials flavor many of the overtures. Others encourage planning for anniversaries, including the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 and the 200th birthdays of Synod pioneers Wilhelm Loehe (2008), Friedrich Wyneken (2010), and C.F.W. Walther (2011). Other overtures deal with youth ministry. One calls for a Synod staff member for Hispanic ministry.

Theology and Church Relations. The convention will act on a recommendation from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to declare altar and pulpit fellowship with The American Association of Lutheran Churches. The AALC was established in 1987 by pastors and congregations concerned about doctrinal positions of church bodies involved in a merger that resulted in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on Jan. 1, 1988. Representatives of the AALC and LCMS have conducted doctrinal discussions toward fellowship since 2005. With headquarters in Minneapolis, the AALC has 79 congregations, 107 active pastors, and 14,137 baptized members.

An array of other issues will be considered, including review of CTCR guidelines for participation in civic events, the practice of “close” Communion, the service of women in the church, and a request for theological guidance on ministry to undocumented immigrants.

Program and Finance. At the request of the 2004 convention, a Blue Ribbon Task Force for Funding the Mission looked at the trend toward increased funding of ministries by direct gifts and decreased funding through traditional “unified budgets” of district and national offices. The task force issued its report last July. Offering 11 recommendations, the task force affirmed the direct-giving process but called for renewed stewardship and evangelism emphasis and education in congregations, efforts to improve

communication, increased management efficiencies, and triennial fiscal conferences involving district and national offices. The task force also proposed financial support from corporate entities and recognized service organizations.

The report generated a number of overtures. Some oppose specific recommendations or propose outright rejection of the report. Another suggests some recommendations have no scriptural basis.

The convention also will consider a bylaw change to rename Worker Benefit Plans to Concordia Plan Services. It also will recognize the LCMS Foundation’s 50th anniversary in 2009.

Seminary and University Education. For some years, the Synod has sought to provide pastoral ministry for unique circumstances such as small rural and urban parishes and among immigrant communities, as well as for church planting and

mission opportunities.

This year, the convention will consider a proposal from the Board for Pastoral Ministry for a “Specific Ministry Pastor” program. Men would gain basic competencies through a program of study developed by the seminary faculties and then take their ordination vows and complete further studies while serving a specific ministry. Much of the study would be done via the Internet and video, short-term seminars, and mentors.

A number of other overtures from congregations and seminary faculties also address training pastors.

Also coming before the convention will be proposals to enlarge the boards of regents at the Synod’s 10 Concordia colleges and universities and the two seminaries. The intent is to draw additional expertise onto the boards from individuals in fields such as finance, law, and business. Conventions would continue to elect a portion of the regents, and the local boards would appoint additional members.

Human Care. A small number of memorials seek to address human-care issues. However, they show a variety of topics: thanks for care and support after Hurricane Katrina, assisting congregations in ministering to undocumented immigrants, stating an LCMS position on stem-cell research, and establishing guidelines for sabbaticals for professional church workers.

Planning and Administration. Several revisions to Synod bylaws have been proposed. Among them are processes for removing a board member and disclosure of potential conflicts of interest, delegate representation to conventions, and elections processes. Also to be considered are the membership and selection of the Commission on Constitutional Matters.



Synod Structure and Governance. A number of overtures deal with a 2004 convention action that defined the authority of the Board of Directors. Under provisions of the 2004 action, the Synod President and the Board of Directors appointed a special committee to give further attention to the issue and report to this convention.

The last convention adopted a process to deal with ecclesiastical supervision, discipline, and expulsion from membership. The topics will return this year:



A number of memorials seek to rescind or change the process.

A Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance is currently at work and will report to the next convention in 2010. In light of its work, some issues may be referred to the task force for incorporation into its report. The task force has issued a study document to encourage discussion of theological principles for the LCMS structure and governance.

In other matters of structure and governance, this year's convention will deal with a number of overtures to affirm or decline specific opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters.

Staying informed

Readers may obtain more information about the convention via the Internet from www.lcms.org/convention. During the convention, the site will be updated frequently with election results and other reports.

 Roland Lovstad is a free-lance writer and a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Perryville, Mo.

One Gift—Many Messengers: National Offering Supports Seminaries

One Message: Christ," the LCMS convention theme, emphasizes worldwide Gospel proclamation, and it calls attention to the need for pastors who will proclaim that message.

Therefore, "One Gift—Many Messengers" is an accompanying theme for the "Preparing Pastors Worldwide" national offering to raise \$1 million to support seminary education. Convention delegates will bring their gifts and offerings from their congregations and circuits. LCMS congregations and their members are also invited to make their gifts directly.

"Not every individual has received information about the offering, but every one has a need for a pastor," says Cindy Simpson, vice president for the Joint Seminary Fund of the LCMS Foundation. "We can't stop preparing pastors; it's not an option."

Two-thirds of the offering will support Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. One-third of the gifts will assist seminary programs of partner churches worldwide.

"This offering seeks to move us beyond the status quo of just filling vacancies," says Simpson, who notes that one in three of the Synod's active pastors will be eligible for retirement by 2009 and another third will reach retirement age by 2019. "We have to look at our vacancies, but also toward the outreach opportunities within and beyond our American borders. Then we realize the magnitude of the educational task. It's unending."

Simpson said educational expenses also continue as seminaries develop



One-third of the national offering will assist the seminary programs of partner churches worldwide such as the Bible Institute of the Lutheran Church of Chile. On Dec. 10, 2006, Alejandro Daniel Lopez Verdugo (left) became the first student to graduate from the institute. With Lopez Verdugo is Rev. Carlos Schumann of the Lutheran Church of Chile.

curricula, pay faculty and staff, maintain facilities, offer distance and continuing education, and provide student aid. Those needs exist in the United States as well as among the 29 LCMS partner churches.

The national offering will continue beyond the convention. For more information, see [www.lcms.org/Pastoral Education](http://www.lcms.org/PastoralEducation) or call the Foundation at (800) 325-7912, ext. 1675. Gifts may be made directly via the Internet.

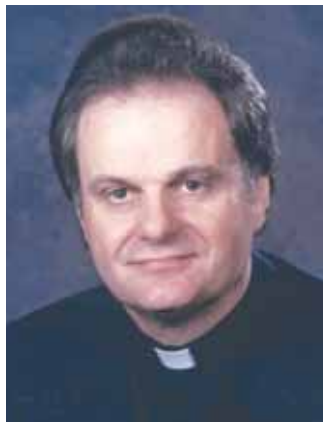
— R.L.

For President

The men nominated by LCMS congregations to stand for election as Synod president offer their insights on the needs of the church and the issues confronting it.

Five men will have their names on the ballot for president when The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod meets in its 63rd Regular Convention July 14–19 in Houston. The five received the most nominations submitted by LCMS congregations, and they have agreed to stand for election. In accordance with the Synod’s Constitution and Bylaws, all are ordained ministers.

The candidates, listed in the order of nominations received, are as follows:



Dr. Wallace R. Schulz, 62, Augusta, Mo., evangelist with the Lutheran Heritage Foundation since 2002, *526 nominations.* He was associate speaker for The Lutheran Hour from 1977 to 2002, an admissions counselor at Concordia College, River Forest, from 1974 to 1977, and a pastor from 1973 to 1974. A 1973 graduate of the Springfield seminary, he served as a Synod vice-president from 1995 to 2004.



Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, 64, St. Louis, LCMS president since 2001, *1,055 nominations.* He was president of the Texas District from 1991 to 2001, on the staff of the Lutheran Foundation of Texas from 1986 to 1991, and a pastor from 1970 to 1986. He is a 1970 graduate of the Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Ill.



Dr. William R. Diekelman, 60, St. Louis, LCMS first vice-president since 2004, *315 nominations.* A 1973 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, he served as president of the Oklahoma District from 1991 to 2004 and as a pastor from 1973 to 2004.



Dr. John C. Wohlrabe Jr., 53, Virginia Beach, Va., an LCMS chaplain in the U.S. Navy since 1987, *607 nominations.* He is a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, served as a pastor from 1982 to 1984, and as assistant director of Concordia Historical Institute from 1984 to 1986.



Rev. Daniel Preus, 58, St. Louis, director of Luther Academy and a pastor at Hope Lutheran Church, *145 nominations.* He served as first vice-president from 2001 to 2004, as director of Concordia Historical Institute from 1995 to 2001, and as a pastor from 1975 to 1995. He is a 1975 graduate of the Springfield seminary.

All five nominees have responded to four questions asked by the staff of the LCMS Board for Communication Services. (To fit space, their original responses were edited, with their approval.)

What, in your opinion, is the most pressing issue facing The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod today? How would you, as president, address it?

Kieschnick: Our most pressing issue is renewed focus on God's mission to reach lost people through proclamation of justification by grace through faith in Christ. "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

As LCMS president, I have encouraged a vision commended by the 2004 convention:

- *One Mission*—to reach lost people for Christ!
- *One Message*—Christ alone is the Savior of the world!
- *One People*—called to unity in Christ through Gospel and Sacraments!

As president, I will continue to lead and encourage Synod officers, district presidents, seminaries, universities, boards, commissions, organizations, pastors, commissioned ministers, and lay leaders to make this vision reality.

The apostles said, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). We are a confessional church. Our confession must be heard as we share Christ's love. "In grateful response to God's grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is *vigorously to make known the love of Christ* by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world" (LCMS Mission Statement).

Wohlrabe: Our Synod is divided over doctrine and practice. The pressing issue is our primary objective to "conserve and promote the unity of the true faith." We have not always maintained our confessional Lutheran integrity, leaning at times toward liberal Protestantism or reformed evangelical fundamentalism.

As president, I would promote scriptural and confessional theology; furnish materials for pastors to provide Gospel-centered teaching about the means of grace, missions, church fellowship, worship, and other areas where there is division; encourage synodical conventions to support uniformity in doctrine and practice; and encourage our district leaders to assist in conserving and promoting this unity.

Schulz: Christ's Church has always struggled to remove discord and division. In 1525, Luther wrote to a church that requested his help. Referring to God's Word

and observing how church councils tried unsuccessfully to correct and renew Christ's Church through many rules, Luther advises, "In the end these rulings and canons became great snares for the soul and pitfalls for the faith. We need good spiritual teachers who will know how to lead the people with wisdom and discretion."

The future of the LCMS lies not in manmade rules, but in pastors and teachers who teach the living Word of Jesus (John 6:63). God's living Word is information and light for the road ahead, and it does something we can never do for ourselves. This Word miraculously cleanses our sinful hearts and heals divisions Satan has created among us (Hosea 6:1).

Diekelman: Today, many voices claim to know the way to eternal salvation. We know the only way is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." The LCMS mission statement says that our mission is "vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world." With one voice we must move forward in one mission as the people of God.

I would give passionate leadership to help congregations strengthen and nurture one another with the Word of God so they may actively reach those who do not have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. At the same time, I would strive to expand the work around the world through our efforts and our partner churches.

Preus: The greatest challenge is retaining our identity as Lutherans. As pastors and congregations assert their independence, we drift apart as a Synod. We seem to be more divided in our doctrine and practice than we have ever been.

The president needs to place less emphasis on bylaws and rulings of the Commission on Constitutional Matters and assist our Synod in refocusing on the scriptural witness laid out so clearly in our Lutheran Confessions. Then, by God's grace, our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will not be just another "conservative" evangelical denomination, but will offer to our congregations and those around us the understanding of the Gospel and the Sacraments that has been our Reformation heritage.

What other issues need to be addressed over the next three years?

Kieschnick:

- Integration of doctrine and practice, acknowledging our doctrinal solidarity while addressing any disagreements over how to put doctrine into practice in a culture largely indifferent or hostile toward Christianity.

- Encouraging congregations in recruiting church workers and supporting our seminaries, colleges, and universities in educating for 21st-century mission and ministry.
- Proper compensation and care for professional church workers.
- Adequately funding the mission at all levels.
- Stronger ministry to youth and children to address the loss of 75 percent of our young people between infant Baptism and their 21st birthday.
- Assisting congregations that recognize the need for renewed vitality as they face decline or possible closure.

Wohlrabe: We should

- strengthen pastoral education, reinforcing the heritage of our seminaries in providing solid, confessional theological education;
- improve the care of church workers by studying attrition and retention rates, salaries, and congregational relations, and encouraging evangelical mentoring;
- maintaining excellent Lutheran education in our schools;
- examine restructuring on the synodical and district levels for stewardship of resources, while maintaining our traditional polity that balances clergy and laity.

Schulz: To reduce politics and heal divisions, we need to return to our early polity with each congregation sending one pastor and one layperson to the national conventions. Representation brings involvement. Involvement brings prayer and financial support. Impossible? If the LCMS can bring together 30,000 youth, then 12,000 adults surely should be able to gather for a triennial convention! We need to cultivate and fertilize the roots—Christ’s people—in our congregations.

Diekelman: We must thank all professional church workers, including our seminary and university faculties, for their leadership. They are instrumental in caring for the church today and raising up leaders for tomorrow.

We must focus on recruiting and retaining professional church workers, developing ways to fund university and seminary education, deploying more missionaries into the field, embracing diverse cultures by proclaiming the Gospel, identifying and incorporating new funding models, maintaining strong youth ministry, engaging the aging, and expanding volunteer opportunities.

Preus: Nothing is more precious to sinful people than the message of forgiveness that is ours through the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. In our increasingly secular society, it should be the goal of every LCMS pastor and congregation to reach as many people as possible with this saving Gospel.

This outreach will happen when God’s Word is proclaimed clearly in our own congregations. The Holy Spirit will, through the power of His Word, strengthen and motivate our pastors and laypeople to bring this message to those around them. Growth strategies based on secular marketing models are not appropriate in the church, nor will our church be blessed through using such programs. Our Synod was designed to help, not rule over, the congregations and will be most effective when it operates from the bottom up.

The Task Force for Funding the Mission has offered 11 recommendations to the convention. Please share your thoughts about the report.

Kieschnick: Most significantly, the task force, while recognizing the sacrificial gifts of faithful stewards, recommends a “stewardship renaissance” in our Synod. A large majority of our congregations do nothing each year regarding stewardship. This needs—and is receiving—attention, not merely for the sake of funding the mission at all levels, but also for the sake of the spiritual health and vitality of God’s people in the LCMS. Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21).

Wohlrabe: The task force should be commended for a thorough appraisal without placing blame for funding challenges. I share concerns over divisions in our Synod and for restructuring to eliminate inefficiencies. I agree with commending seminaries and universities for outstanding financial development. I support the proposal for biblical, Gospel-centered stewardship materials.

My chief concern is over human efforts to “grow the church” with programs and consultants rather than through sound theology. It seems that success is evaluated by membership growth and giving. Christ builds His Church, and the Holy Spirit calls people through the means of grace. We live under the cross, and God’s growth is not always measured in human terms.

Also troubling is the recommendation that could be construed as taxation of congregations and service organizations for synodical membership. And there seems to be an attempt at shaming people into giving and evangelizing. This is Law-oriented motivation. Motivated by the Gospel, we give from gratitude to our Lord.

Our Synod was formed to promote doctrinal unity, the education of church workers, and missions. If these become our main emphases, and our members understand this, we will be excited about supporting the “common good” of the Synod.

Schulz: I hear that pastors are not receiving this plan very well. We need to return to Bible-based stewardship with the Gospel at the center, not by telling our pastors and congregations what they have to do. If this sounds too blunt, remember that our Lord loves a cheerful giver! God's Gospel moves even poor and needy people to give beyond their ability.

Diekelman: First, we thank the task force for addressing this difficult and sensitive subject. The task force reminds us of the generosity of people who support the church's work through their regular offerings and special gifts. The task force recognizes that new patterns of giving also fund the Synod's work.

Underlining this report are ongoing stewardship education, clear communication about the Synod's activities, and celebration of the blessing to be part of the LCMS. The task force suggests ways to implement new patterns of funding. Ultimately, as a church, we must decide how to fund the mission.

Preus: It is evident that the task force spent much time and thought on the report. They made a number of helpful observations and recommendations. Most helpful was the recognition that the Synod needs to connect more with our congregation members. Most of our members are not aware of how our church's work is funded. So improved communication is essential. The task force also noted the negative effects of division. My conviction is that we will not be successful in "funding the mission" unless divisions in doctrine and practice are first resolved in a God-pleasing way.

What is your opinion of *Ablaze!*, the initiative to share the Gospel with 100 million unreached or uncommitted people worldwide by 2017?

Kieschnick: *Ablaze!* is generating excitement about mission in LCMS congregations and renewed energy and vitality in our partner churches! Some have expressed theological concerns, but our seminary presidents and other key theological leaders have said, "Following a review of the *Ablaze!* initiative we do not find anything in it to be inconsistent with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions." *Ablaze!*, along with the *Fan into Flame* campaign, will continue to be a great blessing to the LCMS!

Wohlrabe: There is nothing wrong with setting bold goals. Since its founding, mission work has been a main objective of the Synod. But in line with our Lutheran doctrine of church and ministry, mission outreach has been closely linked with existing congregations and establishing new congregations. Unfortunately, I do not see this emphasis in *Ablaze!* Our Lord's Great

Commission presupposes Word and Sacrament, church and ministry, congregations and pastors. Lutheran congregations need to be connected intimately with our mission focus.

Schulz: *Ablaze!* is based on Acts 1:8 instead of the text the Church has used historically, Matt. 28:19–20. There, Jesus instructs us to evangelize, not merely with a passing witness, but by preaching, teaching, and baptizing with His living Word.

The definition of the "critical event" for counting progress does not include the evangelization of infants, something Jesus taught very decisively (Matt. 19:14). An evangelism plan that omits Baptism of infants runs the risk of forfeiting Christ's blessing and risks His judgment (Matt. 18:6). If God is to bless our mission, we need to base our outreach on Christ's Great Commission to preach, teach, *and baptize*, and model our outreach on that of the Master: teach and teach some more.

With many faithful pastors and congregations, we have potential to be the greatest Reformation church body in the United States. We need to see our future through the eyes of Jesus—not based on our daily failures, but on what He promises, by His life-giving Word and Spirit, to re-create in and through us. This is our prayer, dear Lord Jesus: "Let Your light shine upon us!"

Diekelman: The power of the Holy Spirit is being made manifest through the *Ablaze!* movement. Our congregations have been stirred to action in creative ways to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to their communities and the world. LCMS people have boldly witnessed to unchurched friends and neighbors about the hope that is in them for eternal salvation. We must concentrate on this important work and not allow anyone or anything to distract us. With my prayers and financial offering to *Fan into Flame*—the \$100 million campaign to fund the *Ablaze!* movement—I fully support this modern-day Pentecost initiative. I pray that this work, begun years ago, will not stop at 2017.

Preus: I write these words from Pretoria, South Africa, where I am teaching for a semester at Lutheran Theological Seminary, which has students from South Africa, Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, Liberia, and Botswana. My time with these students—as well as visits to South America, Indonesia, and other parts of the world—convinces me that we live in an extremely exciting time for supporting the mission of proclaiming the Gospel. One very effective way is through education—teaching pastors who then equip laypeople so together they can bring the Word to their communities where God brings many to embrace His grace in Jesus Christ.



RECLAIMING THE CHURCH'S YOUNG IN A CULTURE OF CHANGE

Mid-adolescents have become masters at deceiving adults into thinking everything is OK.

by John W. Oberdeck

Never say to a teenager, “When I was your age ...,” because you never were. You never were a teenager in 2007.

No matter how loudly adults might want to object to this, the truth remains that no one at work in youth ministry today can completely relate to being *their* age in *this* age.

So, just how different are teenagers today from teenagers in times past? And how different is the culture in which they live?

How parents, schools, and congregations go about answering questions like these profoundly shapes congregational ministry among young people.

Over the past several years, Chap Clark, director of the youth and family cohort at Fuller Theological Seminary, has conducted extensive research into today’s adolescent. His conclusions, presented in his groundbreaking work, *Hurt—Inside the World of Today’s Teenagers*, are significant for anyone who cares about kids. Clark served as the keynote speaker for the annual Youth Ministry Symposium for youth leaders sponsored by LCMS Youth Ministry in January.



As he dramatically redefines the traditional understanding of adolescent development, Clark argues that today's adolescents feel abandoned by the adult world. According to Clark, adults have abdicated their responsibility to guide teens into adulthood. "Mid-adolescents" (the term Clark uses for high-school students) feel betrayed and alone. Even the most well-adjusted star athlete with the 4.0 GPA feels used.

"Everyone has an agenda for me, but no one cares about me, no one understands," could be said by just about any teen.

How have adults abandoned mid-adolescents? The very things that are supposed to nurture mid-adolescents into late adolescence and adulthood have been hijacked. Schools are institutions for the benefit of teachers and parents, not students. Families suffer multiple fractures as parents seek what's best for themselves, not their children. Even athletic competition is morphed into vicarious experiences for adults.

Left to raise themselves, mid-adolescents sort themselves into tight-knit clusters based on a social pecking order. Different from cliques, clusters develop intense loyalties. Within the cluster, teens feel accepted simply for who they are. The cluster understands, protects, cares for, and supplies teens with a much-needed support system.

Clusters redefine the traditional "generation gap," better described today as a chasm. Hunkered down in their chasm, mid-adolescents have created what Clark calls "the world beneath." Here, teens develop their own language, dress, sexual mores, and systems of right and wrong that would stun most adults.

Most adults don't know the world beneath exists because mid-adolescents have become masters at deceiving adults into thinking everything is OK. Deep inside, however, most adults know that today's teen experience is not OK.

"Well, at least in the church things are different," I console myself by saying.

But *are* things different?

Clark suggests that even the church has abandoned teens. Congregations supply their teens with teen services and youth pastors, which give the adult congregation permission not to associate with youth. Other congregations are satisfied if teens just show up once in awhile before they disappear into college, modeling what Clark terms the "show up — sit still — shut up" approach to youth ministry.

Teens can feel abandoned by the church when they hear from adults who feel it is their place to tell young people what kinds of music and liturgy they should or should not use for worship, or that God does not approve of some worship styles.

Initially, I bristle when I hear comments indicating that the church has abandoned young people. After all, I know of many congregations that are deeply committed to youth ministry. And the teens I know seem to be

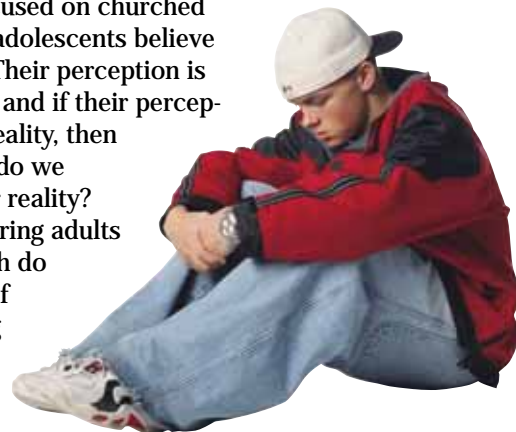
pretty well-adjusted.

Collectively, the youth and late adolescents I generally encounter in the church and at Concordia University Wisconsin, where I teach, appear to be a group of upbeat, well-educated, willing-to-organize, and eager-to-accomplish-great-things bunch of kids.

But after encountering the research, I have to ask if Clark is right. Have kids just learned how to survive in the adult world? Have we abandoned our kids, even in the church?

All the research I read supports Clark's conclusions, not my preconceptions. Shocking reports of dreadful behaviors by urban, suburban, and rural youth hit the news channels with painful regularity. What if my positive perception of youth is simply evidence of how incredibly effective the world beneath has become in shielding the true teen experience? A simple sampling of teen profiles—even those of "good kids" at MySpace or Facebook—reveals lives I don't know. What if the few teens I really know are simply the survivors or the brilliant couriers, double agents who travel between the adult world and the world beneath?

Even if adults don't believe that youth are abandoned, marginalized, and ignored by the church, it is significant that so many (and Clark's research focused on churched youth) mid-adolescents believe differently. Their perception is their reality, and if their perception *is* the reality, then what? How do we change their reality? What can caring adults in the church do in the face of this startling reality?



Research shows many feel abandoned by adults.

For starters, adults who care can help the culture—at least the culture of the church—stop abandoning them. We can sit on the stairs to the world beneath (because we can't go down there) and patiently wait—until they know we can be trusted. We can listen to them, learn from them, and when the time is right, talk with them about the forgiveness of Jesus—for them and for us.

I know that God's Word teaches us to "train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Prov. 22:6 *NIV*).

The psalmist says, "Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according" (Continued on Page 22)

Youth: A Precious Gift

Chap Clark's book, *Hurt*, presents us with a real challenge. What is the role of the *national church* body to nurture young people?

We have a distinguished history in youth ministry. Our first youth group was established in May 1848. C.F.W. Walther, first LCMS president—and considered by many to be a pioneer in American youth ministry—once told his seminary class: “You cannot use your time to better advantage than by serving well the young people of the congregation.”

The Walther League (1893–1968), The Board for Youth Ministry (1968–92), and Lutheran Youth Fellowship (1979–present) all demonstrate the Synod's commitment to help congregations provide effective ministry to and with teens and young adults. The DCS Youth Ministry Office today is responsible for the National Youth Gathering, servant events, the LYF organization, *thESource*, and a number of other programs and resources.

God challenges the adult church to care for its children and youth (Prov. 22:6). To be sure, God has blessed the LCMS with tremendous opportunities for youth ministry, and He has provided the means to accomplish significant things through self-supporting resources and events. The National Youth Gathering is our primary funding source. But isn't it ironic that our youth provide the funds it takes to do LCMS youth ministry?

The adult church must demonstrate its responsibility to walking with youth, and this includes financial support. LCMS Youth Ministry is working to establish new funding resources to provide for the future.

Our children and youth are too precious a resource to abandon to our culture. Let's continue the legacy of caring for youth in our church.

—*Rev. Terry K. Dittmer, LL.D.*
Director, LCMS Youth Ministry

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to your love remember me” (Ps. 25:7 *NIV*). God doesn't remember, but forgets.

I have seen God's Law work in the lives of teens, and I've witnessed the power of the Gospel.

We can speak the Word to them. We can lead them to the means of grace, and we can introduce them anew to the only reality that can ease their loneliness, found in Christ and shared in the fellowship of the church.

Effective youth ministry is that which sees young people where they are “stuck” in the chasm of mid-adolescence and does not leave them there! Effective youth ministry helps them grow to maturity, not just developmentally, but in their faith, which is the true source of growth and nurture. This work is vitally important.

Dr. John W. Oberdeck is an associate professor of theology, assistant director for Lay Ministry, and instructor in Youth Ministry at Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon.



The Sin of the Racially Split Church

by Uwe Siemon-Netto

Back in the days when rulers wore crowns and ermine, only one man in their realm had full freedom of expression—the court jester. He could be vile. He could be insulting. He could be over the top. If the sovereign was truly a sovereign, that is to say, if he had the stature of remaining unfazed, the jester was safe. If, on the other hand, the ruler lacked self-assurance, the poor fool might find himself a head shorter.

In a democracy, the people are the sovereigns, and their jesters are shock jocks such as Don Imus. Perhaps they are not as witty as jokers of ages past—calling young black sportswomen names that shouldn't appear in family magazines seems to suggest that. But it also appears that collectively we—today's sovereigns—may also lack the stature of our crowned predecessors. At any rate, Imus was guillotined for using the jargon of rappers and ghetto gangsters.

My heart isn't bleeding for Imus. His type is as alien to me as are all men dismissing women, God's most lovable gift to us. But I pity the inse-

cure “sovereigns” who, led by pundits such as Rev. Al Sharpton and others, waste millions of minutes of airtime bemoaning the alleged loss of their dignity. Is there nobody out there left with a sense of logic? How could one scruffy radio host's gaffe possibly harm anyone's self-esteem, which is a prerequisite of sovereign rule?

When it comes to discussing race relations in America, shock jocks and outrageous pundits may rule today's airwaves, but Lutherans have a perfect theological antidote—if only we would employ it.

Let me explain why this episode has angered me so. I came to this country in 1962 as a young foreign correspondent from Germany. One of my most rewarding assignments then was covering the civil rights movement. I still have its anthem, “We Shall Overcome,” in my ears. It was stirring when blacks and whites sang it together, notably its second stanza:

*We'll walk hand in hand
We'll walk hand in hand
We'll walk hand in hand some day.*

We were certain then that this “some day” was near. It would have seemed inconceivable then that four decades later one broadcaster's verbal junk would so rile America's people—the sovereign—that our substandard media pushed aside momentous international events—genocide, for example—to make room for endless drivel over three

words many Americans had never heard before.

Worse still, who would have imagined back in the Sixties that the self-segregation of the races would become a major issue in the year 2007? Who would have thought that after prattling for decades of the need for multiculturalism, black students would only sit with blacks and white students with whites and Hispanic with Hispanics, as CNN personality Paula Zahn recently reported from the cafeteria of a high school in Buffalo, N.Y.?

What distresses me is the church's flaccid role in this sorry state of affairs, in helping to resolve a problem that is ripping America apart. All of us have read Gal. 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek ... for you are all one in Christ." That does not seem to be Sharpton's motto. He seems to never mention Christ on camera. In many ways, perhaps, he is more lobbyist than pastor.

What interests me is what we Lutherans are doing to remedy this situation. We have the perfect theology for it. We have educated and erudite black pastors and a wonderful Board for Black Ministry Services. Wouldn't it be great if reporters sought them out for their observations? No other Christian tradition is better equipped than Lutherans to inform the nation of the unshakeable truth so dismally lacking in many TV religious pronouncements—that an ethnically split body of Christ is a theological absurdity.

I know whereof I speak. For the last six years, my wife and I have been members of Mount Olivet Church, an almost all-black LCMS parish in downtown Washington. We joined Mount Olivet, not to make a political statement, but simply because this happened to be our neighborhood church, a confessional, liturgical, and welcoming congregation blessed with a beautiful sanctuary and a powerful Christ-centered preacher by the name of John F. Johnson.

We were warmly embraced.

Not once did we sense any hostility because of our different pigmentation. We were almost immediately asked to serve on the Board of Trustees, and I on the constitution committee. When I had a heart attack, Pastor Johnson and an elder were at my bedside almost instantly. A young Jewish friend from New York happened to be in Washington at the time. So impressed was she with Rev. Johnson's demeanor and the sincerity of his prayers that when she next visited Washington she insisted on going to church with us.

Yet Mount Olivet has remained an all-black congregation. To be sure white Lutherans drop by occasionally, but none seems to join. It is possible, of course, that our members might have been less welcoming had they suddenly been overwhelmed by a massive influx of whites. But what baffles me is why the knowledge of Gal. 3:28 has not persuaded at least some newcomers to help integrate our church family. Clearly it hasn't dawned on us that our two-kingdoms doctrine provides us with the perfect tool to help overcome the ethnic divide.

Race relations are, of course, the property of the secular "left-hand kingdom," as Lutherans say. They can only be governed by natural reason. The Gospel has no answer to questions such as affirmative action. Neither does the Gospel have anything to say about the proper reaction to a shock jock's slur. All this comes under the purview of the Law.

But as the apostle Paul has taught us, pigments should be invisible in the spiritual right-hand kingdom, in divine service, in Bible class, or at the altar rail. In a real church—at least in a church affirming the true presence of Christ in the elements of the Lord's Supper—whites and blacks kneel side by side, drinking from the same chalice, and it would be very odd if this knowledge of being one in Christ would not radiate in some way into the worldly realm where we live out our biological life with all its troubles.

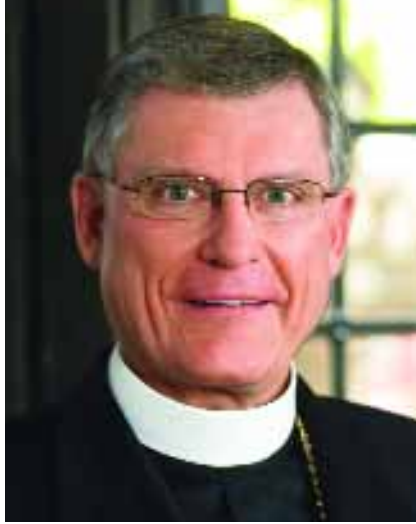
This is not some lofty theory; it should be a fact of faith. Either we are hypocrites if we ignore race on Sundays in church but make it an object of distrust on Monday in the office or at the negotiating table, or we allow the knowledge of being one in Christ to affect our everyday existence.

The time has come for the Lutheran church to stop being timid. We of all Christians should know that it is the church's role to fortify the left-hand kingdom, not by interfering with its sovereigns' craft, but by advising them of what's right and wrong. The alternative is the destructive power of klutzy jesters like Don Imus and pundits like Al Sharpton. We have better people to offer. Let's hear from them.

Dr. Uwe Siemon-Netto is director of the Institute on Lay Vocation at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

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The Synod in Convention

One Message—*Christ! His Love is Here for You!*”

This is the theme for the Synod’s triennial national convention,

which will meet July 14–19 in Houston. It is the second part of the “ONE Mission, ONE Message, ONE People” vision commended by our last convention, in 2004.

The scriptural basis of the convention theme is 1 John 4:9–11: “*This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*”

The apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, focuses specifically and powerfully on the benefit of God’s love made known to mankind in the person of Christ for each and every person in the world. This Gospel of Christ empowers us to love God and our neighbor and propels us to proclaim the light of Christ’s love—the one message of Christ—to all who live in the darkness of doubt and disbelief.

With that ONE message in mind, we will gather in convention to conduct business; to elect officers, boards, and commissions; and, in bylaw language, to “afford an opportunity for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the communication of vital information.”

If you’re not a delegate or otherwise committed to attend the convention, you may not have given any thought to being there. This is your invitation to pay a visit. Bring your family or a delegation from your congregation.

If you can’t visit the convention in person, though, you still can be a part of it—online. Plans are to provide gavel-to-gavel coverage of the convention via video streaming on the Web. See the convention Web site (www.lcms.org/convention) for more information, including times for the Bible studies and outlines that will allow you to follow along. Worship folders for the services also will be provided on the Web.

The *Convention Workbook* has been mailed to delegates, alternate delegates, and rostered church

workers. It includes various reports, overtures (proposed resolutions) submitted by congregations and others, and other important information. If you would like to review a copy but don’t have your own, check with your pastor.

The first issue of *Today’s Business*, which will reflect the work that floor committees did last month to prepare resolutions for convention consideration, should be in the mail by mid June to delegates and congregations. *Today’s Business* also will include the tentative schedule for the convention, which can help serve as a program guide for anyone who wants to watch video-streamed convention coverage on the Web. The schedule also is available online.

As in the past, a national offering will be received as part of the convention. The offering this year is being dedicated to the preparation of pastors worldwide. Two-thirds of the offering will support our two LCMS seminaries, and one-third will support seminaries of our partner churches overseas.

Prior to the start of and during the convention, there will be opportunities for evangelistic outreach to the Houston community. A special outreach event will provide training and opportunities for making calls July 13 and 14.

During the convention, witnessing tools will be provided for use as the Spirit provides opportunity through the course of regular daily activities and encounters. In addition, Apple of His Eye ministries will offer street-witnessing opportunities during lunch breaks.

It is my prayer that God will truly bless our Synod and this year’s convention as we continue in the *One Mission* of seeking the lost for Christ by communicating the *One Message* that Jesus alone is the Savior of the world as *One People* striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel.

Lives Transformed through
Christ, in Time ... for Eternity!
e-mail: president@lcms.org
Web page: www.lcms.org/president

Jerry Kieschnick
John 3:16–17